

5. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE BLACK-NAPED GREEN
WOODPECKER, *PICUS CANUS HESSEI* GYLDENSTOLPE
(PICIFORMES : PICIDAE) IN ORISSA

During the course of a faunistic survey in Orissa in 1976, I collected a female specimen of *Picus canus hessei* Gyldenstolpe on 12 March, from Dhananali, Puri district. Its measurements (in mm.) are: Wing 148, bill from skull 36, tail 100, tarsus 12, and its weight is 137 g.

The Assam population of the Blacknaped Green Woodpecker was separated from *Picus canus hessei* Gyldenstolpe, 1916, as *Picus canus gyldenstolpei* by Baker (1918) on the basis of slight differences in coloration and size. Vaurie (1959), however, treated *gyldenstolpei* as a synonym of *hessei*, since there is very little difference warranting their separation. Ali & Ripley (1970, p. 189, note) while admitting *gyldenstolpei* stated that *hessei* 'is doubtfully separable from' it. On a re-exami-

nation of the material available in this department, however, I am inclined to agree with Vaurie (op. cit.) in not recognizing *gyldenstolpei* as a distinct subspecies.

According to Vaurie (1965) this subspecies occurs in Indochinese countries (with the exception of northeastern Tonkin, northeastern Burma and peninsular Thailand), Assam south to the Lushai Hills (= Mizoram), and eastern Himalaya to Sikkim. As far as known from the extant literature on Indian avifauna e.g., Baker (1927), Ali & Ripley (1970), etc., this species has not so far been reported from Orissa.

The present example reported for the first time from peninsular India extends its distribution as far south as Orissa.

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6. SIGHTING OF THE INDIAN PITTA (*PITTA BRACHYURA*) IN
PAKISTAN

The Indian Pitta spreads across the Himalayan foothill zone during the monsoon season when it breeds but it does not appear to have been recorded further west than Dharamsala

(Whistler HANDBOOK 1949), or Simla (Ripley, S. D., SYNOPSIS 1961). There are no records of its occurrence in Pakistan territory even in the Murree Hill region where several

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species were recorded at the turn of the century which no longer appear to survive or visit this area at the present time.

On June 17th 1978 I was visiting a jungle clad region at the foot of the Margalla Hills just west of Islamabad city when I heard a strange bird calling. Upon investigation this turned out to be the Indian Pitta. There was a pair frequenting the steep hillside above a stream and I had clear views of what was presumably the male singing from the top of a stunted wild fig tree. The location was at about 2,000 feet elevation and hardly more than three miles from the outskirts of Islamabad (33°28'N, 73°03'E). The World Wildlife Fund Appeal had chosen this site for construction of a pre-release pen for the Cheer Pheasant (*Catreus wallichii*) which has been

bred in captivity and is now believed to be extinct in the Margalla Hills. Dr. Sheldon Severinghaus was visiting Pakistan to assist with this project and I was able to bring him the next morning to observe these Pittas. He made recordings of the male which are now lodged in the Cornell University library of bird sounds. I was able to visit the area again on July 13th 1978 at which time one individual was still in the same vicinity and heard calling, however when I reported this find to a keen ornithologist friend, Mr. T. J. Roberts he failed to find any trace of these birds on July 28th. The Margalla Hills are covered with dry tropical deciduous type of scrub forest and would seem to provide ideal habitat for Pittas.

C-24, K. D. A. SCHEME No. 1,
DRIGH ROAD, KARACHI,
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KAMAL ISLAM

7. A NEW BIRD FOR NEPAL AND NOTES ON OTHER SCARCE SPECIES

At 16.00 hours on 23rd February 1978 I was fortunate enough to be drifting downstream along the main channel of the Narayani River just below its confluence with the River Rapti in the Nepalese terai when I spotted a swan some 200 yards ahead. My companions were principally amateur European bird-watchers and naturalists, members of a special interest tour I was leading for Town and Gown Travel of Oxford, UK, as well as Khadak Kumar of Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge staff. As we drifted closer the pure white plumage, smallish size and yellow area at the base of the black bill became visible.

I turned the boats and we approached within about 80 yards to obtain excellent views of the truncated (not pointed) yellow area at the base of the bill. At this point the bird pattered over the surface showing its black feet, and took to the air with neither wing sound nor call. In the air the comparatively rapid wing beats and general compactness reinforced my identification of this bird as a fully adult, wild Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus*. Sálím Ali and S. Dillon Ripley's HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN list five records for the sub-continent, none in Nepal. R. L. Fleming Sr., R. L. Fleming Jr., and L. S.